

**Jennifer Smith, Legislative Director – District 1199/SEIU Healthcare**

Public Health Committee – February 27, 2013

Testimony in SUPPORT of:

- *H.B. No. 6005 An Act Concerning A Moratorium On The Closure Of Group Homes Operated By The Department Of Developmental Services*
- *S.B. No. 129 An Act Concerning The Hartford Regional Center Operated By The Department Of Developmental Services*

As the direct care workers at the group homes operated by the state AND by the private-provider agencies (AND in home care), our District 1199 members have first-hand experience in working with clients in each of these settings. We also have first-hand experience in the negative impact that closing a group home has on those who call it home.

First, just to be clear, District 1199 *strongly* supports the development of a broad continuum of care/service options and consumer/family-directed choices.

The problem with the Department of Developmental Services' recent rapid closure of state-run group homes is that it is *eliminating* the opportunity of choice – both for current clients (many of whom have lived together in the group home family-setting for 10, 15, sometimes 20 years) and for families in the future. There are many situations where in-home care is not realistic and private-providers are unable to provide the level of supports needed for certain individuals (especially those who have high medical or behavioral needs).

This Public Health Committee, chaired then by Chris Murphy, and the Legislature approved a moratorium on state-run group home closures for this very reason. It provided several years of stability and choice, and still allowed for the development of in-home and private-provider options as well. As soon as that language sunsetted, however, DDS resumed its hurried effort to shut down existing state-run homes.

We urge the Committee to approve *H.B. No. 6005 An Act Concerning A Moratorium On The Closure Of Group Homes Operated By The Department Of Developmental Services* and *S.B. No. 129 An Act Concerning The Hartford Regional Center Operated By The Department Of Developmental Services*.

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